



**Testimony to the CGA General Law Committee
Testimony by Louis W. Burch
Citizens Campaign for the Environment**

**March 15, 2016
Hartford, CT**

Senator Leone, Representative Baram, distinguished vice chairs and esteemed members of the CGA General Law Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this important issue.

My name is Louis Burch and I represent Citizens Campaign for the Environment (CCE). Supported by over 80,000 members in Connecticut and New York State, CCE works to empower communities and advocate for solutions that protect public health and the natural environment. I would like to offer the following testimony in opposition to SB 312:

SB 312- An Act Requiring the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection to Study Bottle Bill Beverage Container Refund Values and Redemption Fees

Connecticut's bottle deposit law (A.K.A. *the Bottle Bill*) is a convenient and proven effective way to keep our environment clean and free from glass and plastic waste that would otherwise litter our roadways, beaches, and open spaces. According to the Container Recycling Institute, beverage containers make up anywhere from 40-60% of litter generated in the U.S.¹ A 5-cent refundable deposit on carbonated beverages and water bottles incentivizes recycling by giving these containers a monetary value, which can be redeemed at any beverage distributor, any day of the week.

CCE strongly opposes this bill as it would repeal Connecticut's 5-cent bottle deposit, replacing it with a 4 cent "recycling surcharge," which would be used to "promote recycling and anti-litter initiatives in the State." In reality, this bill would eliminate the best incentive we have for recycling glass and plastic beverage containers. Instead of incentivizing the public to recycle, the bill would create a State-controlled fund that would be susceptible to raids and uses other than its intended purpose. Repealing the bottle bill will have a direct and immediate adverse impact on Connecticut's recycling rates for beverage containers (currently more than 56%,

¹ <http://www.bottlebill.org/about/mythfact.htm>

which is higher than the national average!) and will inevitably lead to more unsightly glass and plastic trash littering our communities and threatening our environment.

Additionally, the bill would require a study of recycling rates related to the bottle deposit law. CCE believes this to be an unnecessary waste of taxpayer dollars to study what we already know, which is that the bottle bill works. Rather than allocating precious taxpayer dollars to study this issue, Connecticut should be working to expand this practical and cost effective program by expanding the bottle deposit law to include juices, teas, and other non-carbonated beverages that are not currently covered, yet represent one of the fastest growing solid waste streams in the nation.

In conclusion, CCE strongly opposes SB 312 and respectfully urges this committee to reject this ill conceived proposal as soon as possible. Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to working with this committee on ways to improve recycling in Connecticut by expanding, not repealing our State's bottle deposit law.